

# THE CASE OF CLUETT PETERS

Synopsis of Chapters Already Published

Cluett Peters, son of Hiram Peters, the magnate, and extremely a dapper, well-mannered young man, makes good in his job in the Second Mechanical National Bank of New York city. One night, after papers valued at \$500,000 have been entrusted to him, the watchman of the bank is found badly wounded, and the papers missing. Cluett, upon whom suspicion naturally falls, is traced to Boston, where, having registered at a harbor-front hotel as "Walter Johnson," he has struck up an acquaintance with Bill Durkin, a seafaring man, and shipped with him aboard the Occident plying between Portland and Boston. There, a detective, chasing them from Portland to Philadelphia, where he is man-handled by Durkin, who seems as anxious as "Johnson" to escape from the detective. They elude him, however, in Washington, where they have a night, "Johnson" knocking Durkin out, after which he takes Durkin's bag and carries a motor car. Next morning Mr. Cluett Peters shows up in the office of Mr. Hungerford, president of the Second Mechanical National Bank, with the \$500,000 worth of stolen papers.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE BOMB THROWER.

PREMATURE blasts in a mine make quite an edification. So does the explosion of a nitroglycerin house in a dynamite works; so, even, to carry the thing to an extreme, does the corner grocer, when his wealthiest patron moves out of town without paying his bill.

Yet of all these, perhaps none could be quite so startling, quite so staggering, as the appearance of Mr. Cluett Peters that morning.

Cluett Peters was soiled. Cluett Peters had good cause to be soiled. The automobile coat he had purchased in Washington was no good at all—the dust filtered through it like water, going through a sieve. Further, he had not known the luxury of a "shin" since leaving New York. Still further—and this is the really horrible part—the same identical collar was about his neck that had been there when he started for Hungerford's house on that fatal evening. The collar had not improved!

Yet Cluett Peters was his own calm little self. His smile, despite a pound or so of dust and dirt, beamed out kindly and cheerily and politely as of yore. He perceived his father after a second or two, and walked over and shook hands with him; and, incidentally, if Cluett had been avaricious and a reader of faces, he might have asked papa for an extra billion just then and received it! The son, however, had proved a very poor, cheap substitute for the expression of the elder Mr. Peters just then!

Cluett returned to business! He walked back to his shabby canvas bag and opened it. From its dingy depths he began to produce packages, one after the other.

When half a dozen were in his arms, he carried them over to Mr. Hungerford and laid them on his desk.

"They are all there!" he said, quietly. "I checked them 'up in the automobile coming up."

"Whose automobile?" asked his papa, irrelevantly.

"Mine, I bought it."

"Where?" asked Mr. Hungerford. "In Washington."

Cluett's papa leaned back and roared in senseless mirth.

"Cluett!" he cried. "Have you bought another automobile?"

"Yes, dad!"

"What did you buy it in Washington for?"

"Well, I guess it was because I happened to be in Washington at the time, dad!" Cluett smiled apologetically.

Again he turned to Mr. Hungerford. "Are the bonds all right, sir?"

"My dear boy—" The bank president licked his lips. "I—that is—"

"Well, are they all intact, sir?"

"Cluett," said Mr. Hungerford, solemnly, "at a cursory glance, they are! And I have no doubt whatever that the roughest kind of inspection will prove them to be absolutely correct. But—"

"But why—why—what—" Cluett's papa, even, was growing excited. "Cluett, you've got to account for yourself!"

"Me?" Cluett smiled. "I've got a regular dime novel story to tell!"

Unwittedly, he sat down. Then he grinned broadly. "I've been seeing a trifle more of the world, dad!"

## EDGAR FRANKLIN

Author of "The White Streak of Disaster," "The House of Suspicion," "Chicago by Thursday," "The Burden of the Billions," Etc.

when his narrative came, it was quite as precise as Cluett himself. "I came down to the bank, that night, with the Barlow papers," he said, concisely. "When I reached here there were too many lights. I walked around to the side, and there was a window open, half way, and two men standing behind it. I listened to them. One of them had a canvas bag—this canvas bag," explained the younger Mr. Peters. "Well, I listened—that was all, and they gave the whole thing away because they thought nobody was listening. I gathered that they had knocked out the watchman and opened the safe downstairs and removed all the negotiable papers."

"Who were they?" Hungerford asked quickly.

"One was an employee of the bank," said Cluett. "He is still here, because I saw him when I came in."

"Well, who—"

"Just a moment, sir. I realized very suddenly that I was really the only person who could be supposed to enter the vault at night—that night, at any rate. I looked around for a policeman and could not find him. Just then the rough man—the one who had evidently done the assault on the watchman, was allowed to leave by the side door, around the corner."

The younger Mr. Peters smiled remissly.

"Well, I went after him—that's all. I knew that somebody had to get back whatever had been stolen, and it seemed to me that I was the person. You see, our employee here had tinkered the timeclock until he could do anything he liked with it. He—yes, it seems to me that he said he had opened it, after I left and set it for 12. Yes; I'm quite sure that's what he said!"

"I believe you're right!" Hungerford agreed, dryly. "But the man—"

"Please!" smiled Cluett, apologetically. "I followed the gentleman to Boston street. Then I shipped with him on a freighter to Portland. Then we had a little trouble and went to Philadelphia; after that we started for Washington, and somewhere about there I found out that one of your detectives was after us and that I might have called him in to help me."

"And then?"

"Well, that's all, Mr. Hungerford. I just thought—about Washington—that as I had kept those bonds in sight that long, I might as well bring them back in person."

Cluett's papa looked at the president; and the president looked back; and Cluett's papa said gently:

"And how did you—I don't understand it all as yet—but how did you get the bonds back, Cluett?"

"Why, dad," said the paragon, "I just got the man where I wanted him and put a couple of good whacks between his eyes—and then I took what he had and came back. That's all!"

Hungerford drew a long breath. Cluett was really human after all.

"I'll tell you all about it later," that young gentleman explained. "I wish Jenkinson would come. I feel untidy."

The elder men took to staring at each other again—and before they were quite done the telephone bell rang violently.

Mr. Hungerford answered.

"What?" he looked at Peters and covered the transmitter with one hand.

"That man in the hospital has come to at last. They say he wants to send me word of—"

"The hand came away. 'What? Going to get well, is he? That's good. What? First of all—'

"What? Well, you tell him not to worry. We'll be sure of his family and a half dozen more, and I'll be there this afternoon. Good-by."

He laid aside the receiver and turned pale to the par.

"He sent word?" Mr. Hungerford explained thickly, "that he didn't know the man who struck him down, but that he was with—Mr. Marshfield."

"That's right," responded Mr. Peters the younger. "The other man—the man who was talking behind the open window with the man I chased—was Mr. Marshfield!"

Marshfield appeared in a moment. When he entered, Hungerford motioned to a chair, and the cashier sat down. "Marshfield," said the president, "have you, as yet, conceived a sound theory as to who stole those bonds?"

"Frankly, sir, I haven't," said the cashier, earnestly.

"Can you call to mind anybody in this bank who could have—er—pulled off the trick?"

"No, sir. It is as much a mystery to me—"

"As the man who went to Boston with the bonds—what?" the president said quickly.

It was a sharp shot. Marshfield, despite himself, went white as snow.

"As the man who—what, sir?" he said.

"As the man who took the bonds to Boston—after he had snatched Tomkins—after you had taken out the bonds and given them to him, to be divided later—after you had abused every bit of trust this bank placed in you, Marshfield—after—"

And the scene ended suddenly, for Mr. Marshfield had toppled from his chair and was in a little huddle on the floor. Marshfield had fainted!

Hungerford, who really lacked emotion, merely glanced at the form and picked up his telephone again.

"Police headquarters!" he remarked casually.

Then:

"Hungerford—Second Mechanical National Bank. Yes. Send me down two men in plain clothes, and in a hurry. Yes. That's right, only have them here quick!"

After which he looked at Marshfield again.

"He doesn't need an ambulance," he observed. "He'll come around all right in a little while—if he isn't taking. Then—"

## SENATE OFFICE ROW BLAMED ON LODGE

Bay State Man Wants to Keep Capitol Quarters and New Ones, Too.

As has been previously stated, certain of the new Senators are discontented with the manner in which choice quarters in the \$4,000,000 office building are being distributed. Up to this time they have merely voiced their protests in a gentle manner. Now they are prepared to howl long and loudly.

Senator Lodge of Massachusetts has kicked up the rumpus. He, being one of the members of the "upper crust" in the Senate, and training regularly with Senators Hale and Aldrich, picked out for himself one of the most desirable suites. It consists of two private offices for himself, and one for his two secretaries, both of which are elaborately and comfortably furnished. There is a bathroom in which a fagged statesman and his weary secretaries may indulge in a shower bath, a needle bath, or almost any other kind of a bath.

The Senator's present office in the Capitol is considered one of the show places of Washington. It cost the Government \$25,000 to import a German artist to paint the ceilings and side walls. It is, in short, quarters which even the president of a trust might envy.

Lodge, being of artistic temperament, is loath to leave it. In addition to its comfortable and beautiful surroundings it is handy to the Senate chamber, and saves him many steps. There, he will keep it, and will do his work there, as will his secretaries. He will devote his expensive suite in the office building to the storage of his old correspondence, his speeches, and the numerous books of which he is the author, some of them being work on which he had the assistance of Theodore Roosevelt.

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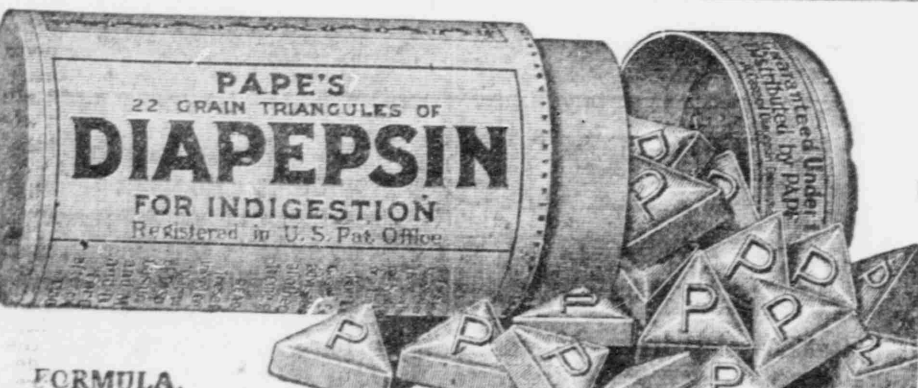
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